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EDITORIAL NOTES

Two articles in this number of the *Elementary School Teacher* discuss the orientation of the Elementary School, with reference

**The
Articles of
Mr. Bain and
Mr. Kent on
Industrial
Training**

to industrial training. Mr. Kent attacks the problem in its simplest form and suggests practical changes and additions which would involve hardly any increase in school expenses. What he presents is a change in point of view in giving the manual-training course in the elementary school, its extension by classes out of school hours with voluntary attendance, and a special course for boys a year or two after the elementary-school period. Mr. Kent lays especial stress upon the possibility of using this work to discover and emphasize different forms of "mechanical abilities," which should be the basis of trade choice. Mr. Bain attacks the problem with a view to an alternative curriculum for the two last years in the elementary school following in the steps of the English elementary technical schools; that should prepare the child, boy or girl, to approach industrial occupations after having gained a general grounding in their common methods and the opportunity for more intelligent vocational choice.

Both writers recognize that work at this period cannot be specialized trade-school work. Both appreciate that this type of training must react back into the elementary-industrial school curriculum, that this foundation for industrial training has its cultural value as well as its specialized industrial import. Thus the problem of industrial training in our elementary schools appears definitely in these articles. It must be general, selective, and in the best sense instructive. It should gather about the motor processes, but the work suggested is as really educational as any that the elementary school offers.

General consent among educators and employers of skilled

labor, and skilled workmen, calls for an unspecialized industrial training up to the fifteenth or sixteenth year. If this position is frankly accepted, many who have feared the trade school will be relieved. At least in the elementary school, the training will remain educative in an unspecialized sense. Here the interpretation through the history and literature of mechanical activities will remain. The undeveloped character of the child saves him from too early specialization. Another count is added to the advantages Professor Fisk has detailed of a prolonged period of infancy.

This type of education can and should be distinctly liberal in its character. On the one side its history and geography and on the other its presentation of civic and industrial conditions relate the trade occupations both to their social origins and their immediate social conditions. The economic conditions, so far as children of that age comprehend these, can be touched upon in connection with the raw materials and the market. Out of this will arise an interest in the whole product which may lay the foundation for that intelligence which can in some measure resist the narrowing influence of the specialized labor in the factory.

There are, to be sure, those who see little if any purpose in such attempts at increasing the general occupational intelligence of the factory laborer. Except for the opportunities which will develop the unusual boy who is to be the high-grade mechanic or foreman, the only ideal they will recognize is that of speed in operating the individual machine with the necessary bondage of the factory worker to the machine itself. Beyond the reply that the right to think and to comprehend can never be deliberately denied to anyone by our community, there is a very pertinent consideration which needs emphasis—that our tools (and these include our machines of the most complicated sort) are invented and constructed as much with reference to those who are to use them as to the product which they are to turn out. The increased intelligence of the workmen is as sure to affect the type of machine as is the demand for specific goods. The mod-

ern factory looks as definitely toward the immense supply of cheap, unintelligent labor, as it does toward the vast market for inexpensive articles which our methods of transportation make possible. Many a recent labor-saving device has arisen in answer to so temporary a labor condition as a strike; and whole factories have been built and equipped to make use of the cheaper labor of women and children. If the history of invention in industry proves anything it is that increased intelligence in the laborer will inevitably reflect itself in the form and function of the tool he uses.